

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Thursday Morning, September 29, 1994

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 142nd annual session with Little Cowan Church, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

In early 1912, or earlier, a group of people from Little Cowan Creek began to see their need of a Savior and a place to worship where the true Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached. We have no record before 1912, but we do know these people went by horseback or on foot to a little church on Linefork Creek, about 20 miles away. This church was called The Hurricane Gap Church of Regular Primitive Baptists, with Elder D. F. Gilley as moderator and a member. Soon many of them were saved and became members of that church, but they longed for a church near home. After much praying and trust in God with an arm from the Hurricane Gap Church, our church was organized in June 1913, and was called The Little Cowan Church of Primitive Baptists, which it has remained until today. Elder D. F. Gilley was elected moderator and Bill Banks, church clerk.

Elder Gilley served as moderator from June 14, 1913 to September 1937; J. R. Peters, assistant moderator, June 9, 1917 to March 8, 1919; Jim Maggard, assistant moderator, March 11, 1933 to June 14, 1934; Jesse Gilley, assistant moderator and moderator, May 10, 1937 to September 11, 1948; Bernard Banks, moderator, February 10, 1945 to May 19, 1988; Logan Willis, moderator, September 11, 1948 to July 9, 1949; May 10, 1952 to May 1953; J. H. Sybert, moderator, May 15, 1950 to May 10, 1952; Bert Banks, moderator, May 10, 1958 to September 9, 1987; Oscar Irvin has been our good moderator for the last six years, with associates Ray Raleigh, Brad Dutton and Woodrow Fields.

Older ministers who helped in the organizing of our church were: Elders A. N. Joyner, J. P. Peters, E. A. Robinette, F. M. Long, J. R. Peters, E. S. McPherson, Hal Lassiter, F. M. Phipps and maybe others whom we have no record of. Charter members of our church were: Floyd and Alcy Banks, Bill and Susan Banks, Serena Jones, Susan Long, Peggy Day, Elizabeth Banks, Loretta Adams, Katie Day, Millie Bush, John D. Ison, Alec Ison, Lee Ison, Arminta Ison, Samantha Ison, Gilbert Boggs and Malinda McDaniels.

Our church was received into the Eastern District Association October 2, 1913, with delegates J. F. Banks and Gilbert Boggs. The Hurricane Gap Church was also received into the Association on the same date.

When our church was organized, services were held in the Little Cowan school house, a few hundred feet from where our church now stands. Ground for the old school was given by James Banks, grandfather of Bernard Banks and several of our now living members. A sum of money was given to the school board entitling the church use of the building for as long as it was needed.

Brother Bernard had bought the property just below Aunt Rebecca Jones's home, and he gave the church 60 feet in the upper end of the bottom and the first part of our church was built here. Later we bought the ground where the blacktop is and built the annex on the church which was dedicated to the memory of Minnie Vae Banks.

God has been good to us these 81 years. Since our church was organized, all of

the first ministers and members during the first 15 years of our history have gone on to their reward. But we have been blessed with others who have brought us the same gospel, preached in its power and purity and have meant much to us in our church, our homes and community. Those we think of are Elders D. F. Gilley, J. R. Peters, A. N. Joyner, F. M. Phipps, E. A. Robinette, W. H. Burke, George Short, Pleas Jenkins, Logan Willis, Ben Hill, Hobart Hall, J. H. Sybert, Alex Willis, Bryan Moore, Frank Brown, C. E. Slagle, Hampton Osborne, Tom Carter, Bob Carter, Elmo Dodson, Clarence Johnson, Basil Freeman, Coy Lawson, Clifford Williams, J. D. Maggard and others. Now the younger ones are still bringing us the true gospel and holding on to that faith which was once delivered to the saints. We thank God, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and all who have helped in any way to make our church what it is today.

Our membership today is 121. We are thankful the same God who inspired our forefathers more than 80 years ago is still watching over and caring for His people and we believe if time should go another 80 years, there will still be some at the Little Cowan Primitive Baptist Church who still serve and worship our God of our creation in the same old-fashioned way.

God's wonderful spirit warmed the hearts of those gathered for the first day of the association. God's people greeted each other with wonderful smiles, handshakes and fellowship. There is no better sight than to see and be a part of God's people coming together to worship Him in truth and in spirit. The congregation assembled in the tent as Sister Glennis Little led them in singing some old songs of Zion. This world is filled with sorrow and woe, but those that are going that way and trusting the unseen hand can read their title clear. It won't be very long until we can behold his glorious face in that beautiful city He has prepared for His children. Sisters Patsy Hensley and Doris Burke blessed us with their songs of praise. His children are not afraid to bid this world goodbye, for we're going to sweet Beulah Land.

Elder John Henry Sybert welcomed the congregation and appointed the Committee on Religious Exercises. This committee includes: Paul Wallen (chairman), Morris Giles and Mike Peterson.

We were further blessed by singing from Sister June Kail, followed by Sister Cora L. Neeley. In this life we are shackled by many heavy burdens, but Jesus will carry our load if we will just take the road we know, the one He prepared for us at Calvary.

Elder Sybert read a note from the family of Elder Bob Vermillion thanking the association for all the help they gave them last year. Sister Naomi Thacker thanked the association in person for the help she received after the passing of her husband, Elder Fremon Thacker. It was a blessing to see her able to come to the association this year and hear her testimony.

Elder Sybert recalled when Elder Bernard Banks and several others gathered at the association held with Edwin Holbrook Memorial several years ago, and how we miss all those that have gone on to their reward. He also remembered Elders Fred Smith and George Gibson, two of our preaching brethren that have passed from our ranks since we last met. He asked the congregation to remember the following ministers in our prayers: Elders J.D. Maggard, Hobart Hall, Walter Drinnon, Johnny Sykes, Henry Wheeler, Arthur Hensley, Bryan Moore, Lloyd Scalf, Lucian Lane, Gordon Justice, Bazzle Manis, Bobby Williams, Richard Watts, Hasco Jenkins and Gale Derrick. We must also remember Sister Ora Arnott and the family of Otis Lawson, who passed away earlier in the week. Special requests were made for Sister Zula McCullough's

great-nephew who is undergoing surgery today and for Eddie Malone's mother-in-law who was just diagnosed with bone cancer. Many hands were uplifted to signify unspoken requests just before Elder Roger Trent led us to the throne of grace.

After prayer Elder Sybert led the congregation in singing the association's standard, "Brethren We Have Met Again." The singers from Little Cowan blessed our hearts with more wonderful songs. The Lord is truly in our midst while gathered here, but we look forward to that land of Beulah, blessed, blessed land of life.

Elder Woodrow Fields came forward to welcome everyone to Little Cowan. He thanked everyone for voting to send the association to Little Cowan and for coming, but most of all he thanked God for His presence. His wonderful Spirit will make us welcome.

Having been chosen to preach the introductory sermon, Elder Oscar Irvin came forward. He read from Acts 2:38-47 and Jude 1:3 using it as his text, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." In the eyes of this world we are known as old time folks and somewhat unlearned, but we know the Lord, wherein lies our strength. Satan's followers have done everything humanly possible to discredit God's people, but anything that is of God can not be brought down and anything that is not of God will not stand. Elder Eckel Head (alternate) followed with an inspiring message. God's work is not in the hands of this world, but in the hands of His people. Therefore we must give all diligence throughout our lives, just like Jude did, for the faith that was delivered to the Saints. God's message is the same yesterday, today and forever more. Shouts of joy and praise for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came from all over the tent as these men preached and God so wonderfully blessed His people.

Adjourned for lunch.

Thursday afternoon, September 29, 1994

The host church served everyone a wonderful lunch and the congregation reassembled in the tent with singing led by Sister Patsy Hensley. We were blessed with songs from Elder Bobby Williams and his wife, Juanita, followed by Elder Darrell Ratliff. When that final call comes, God's children will be safe for He will be with us all the way. His amazing grace will allow us to go on rejoicing and spending our time serving Jesus for some glad day we will arise.

Elder Sybert thanked the host church for the bountiful lunch and mentioned some special prayer requests for: John and Jim Bowlin's mother, all the requests made this morning and most of all for the unsaved. God's children signified many unspoken requests with uplifted hands and Elder Allen Hensley led us to the throne of grace.

The Committee on Religious Exercises now reports.

Stand tonight: Allen Hensley and Richard Seiber.

Blair Chapel: Bobby Williams, John Arnott and Roger Trent.

Stand, Friday morning, September 30, 1994: Roger VanHoose and Bobby Brown.

Brother Ralph Baker, chairman of the committee on Church Letters, now reports 65 churches which they recommend accepting. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee and seat those delegates duly elected or appointed by their respective churches as the voting body of the association.

Elder Sybert called it to the attention of the association that two churches did not letter in this year due to lack of attendance. These churches have been with us for many years and it is truly sad to hear they are not among us for this reason. Silver's Chapel did not letter in last year for the same reason. Each of us needs to pray without ceasing that God's will be done in these churches.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for Elder John Arnott to serve as moderator pro-tem for the election of the association officials.

It was motioned and seconded for Brother Danny Lawson to serve as clerk and treasurer. It was then motioned and seconded for nominations to cease, therefore by acclamation Brother Danny will serve as clerk.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for Elder John Henry Sybert to serve as moderator.

Elder Sybert thanked the delegation for their confidence, prayers and support over the years and asked them to continue praying for him. The clerk also thanked the delegation for their confidence in him and assured them he would do his best. He also asked them to continue praying for him.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for the moderator to appoint any and all committees. The moderator then appointed the following committees:

Committee on Newly Constituted Churches: Ministers - Terry Sizemore (chairman), Bobby Brown, Eckel Head; Deacons - Eugene Wallen, Edgar Neeley; Laymen - Jack Osborne and Bobby Caudill.

Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries: Gale Derrick (chairman), Gordon Justice, Lowell Johnson, Darrell Ratliff, Glenn Cornett, Richard Seiber, Neal Drinnon and Roger Trent.

Committee on Finance: Jim Jarnigan (chairman), Earl Miles and Bobby Carter.

Committee on Obituaries: Hasco Jenkins (chairman), A. D. Howington and Tommy Meade.

It was decided at last year's association that the Virginia trustees should check on how the deed for Catron's Chapel was written. Brother Jess Atkins reported to the association as stated on the deed that it would be in full force so long as this place is used by the Primitive Baptist Church, but when it ceases to be used for religious purposes it shall revert back to the original owners of their estate. It was motioned and seconded to dismiss this matter as far as the association is concerned and it was motioned and seconded for the association clerk to send a letter to the clerk of Catron's Chapel informing them that their ordination papers are no longer valid and as such, any ministers ordained through our association are no longer legally ordained.

The delegation voted to approve both of these motions.

The moderator brought a thought before the delegation that the practice of inviting the sick to the altar and anointing them with oil that they might be healed was being practiced in some of our churches. He asked everyone to refer to the writings of James in this matter. After some discussion no further action was taken.

Adjourned until Friday morning, September 30, 1994.

Friday morning, September 30, 1994

God continued to bless His people as they gathered for the second day of the association. As the congregation assembled in the tent, Sister Zula McCullough led the congregation in several songs of Zion. Oh what love, matchless love God has for His children. We long for an uncloudy day where we'll meet on heaven's beautiful shore in the sweet by and by. He suffered for us so our soul could be redeemed and we can proclaim I'm saved, saved, saved!

Elder J. H. Sybert, the moderator of the association, welcomed everyone back and thanked the host church, committees and everyone for their cooperation and fellowship. After reminding the ministers to sign the minister's book, he requested prayer for Elder John Turner's brother, Jim and Elder John Bowlin's mother, the family of Otis Lawson, Sister Dexal Greer's sister, Sister Ora Roberts, Sister Ora Arnott, Elder David Jerrell, the men and women in service to our country, Elder Hasco Jenkins' grandson that is in Haiti, Elder Henry Wheeler's brother-in-law, all requests made in prior services and most of all the unsaved. Brother Billy Jack Johnson took our petitions to the Lord in a most humble prayer.

The delegation was called to order to transact the business. Let us always strive to keep the business secondary to the worship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday as read.

The clerk read the letter that was prepared to send to Catron's Chapel. It was motioned, seconded and voted to send the letter to the church as read.

The committee on arrangements and/or queries reported that none had been received.

Elder Sybert sung the old song "How Great Thou Art" and led the congregation in another song before the preaching service began.

Elder Roger VanHoose, having been chosen by the committee on religious exercises, came forward to take the first part of the service. He read Proverbs 15:32-33 and Luke 8:26-37. Sin abounds in this world on every hand, but Jesus takes care of His children. He will cast our sin from us, just as he cast the devils from Legion. When Jesus was done with Legion he didn't live among the tombs any more, because he had a right mind and went forth to do the will of God. In Christ we are free indeed. Elder Bobby Brown followed with another wonderful message from on high. We must get our minds centered on Jesus and off the things of this world. Without Him in our lives we don't have the right mind to handle all the things Satan will throw at us. If we

center our hearts on God, He will give us a sound mind and God's love will abound. These men preached so wonderfully to us and God richly blessed His people. Tears of joy, shouts of praise and adoration filled the tent as His people rejoiced. Thank God for His Amazing Grace.

Adjourned for lunch.

Friday afternoon, September 30, 1994

After another bountiful lunch served by the host church, the congregation came together with songs of Zion and wonderful testimonies praising God. Standing on the promises of God we can be a light for Jesus and continue on our journey on the grand old highway. Glory be to Him that died for us that we can all continue going that way. In that sweet hour of prayer we can thank Him for His free gift of salvation, for what He's done for us in the past and what He's going to do in the future. After the congregational singing we were further blessed with singing from the Riverside Quartet and the West View singers. When we kneel and call His name, everything is alright as we talk to the Lord. As we travel the Glory Road telling the story, each of His children can say "Jesus is Mine" for He is real in the hearts of His people. We have to put our feelings aside, for the Lord knows best and there is strength in the Lord.

The moderator announced several revivals that would be starting in the near future at various churches. These include:

Blair Chapel, October 9, 1994: Bobby Williams and Jerry Scalf;

West View, November 20, 1994: Bobby Brown;

Fairview (Va), October 16, 1994: Richard Seiber and Wayne Morgan.

Elder Sybert asked the congregation to remember all the prayer requests made earlier, Jamie Kinsler, Brother Arthur Browning's nephew's newborn twins, the unsaved and a host of unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Elder Jim Jarnigan led us to the throne of grace.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

The Committee on Religious Exercises now reports.

Stand tonight: J. H. Sybert and Roger Trent.

Blair Chapel: Hasco Jenkins, Terry Sizemore and Bobby Brown.

Edwin Holbrook Memorial: Allen Hensley, Lucian Lane and Bobby Williams.

Stand, Saturday morning, October 1, 1994: Bobby Williams and Terry Sizemore.

Elder Terry Sizemore, Chairman of the Committee on Newly Constituted Churches, reports that two new churches have been organized and wish to letter into the association. One church located in Highland, Ohio is called Macedonia and the other is located in White Pine, Tennessee and is called New Life. After examining the letters from these churches, the committee recommended that both be received. The

chairman of the committee admonished any churches that extend an arm to help start a new church to not only help them get started, but to continue working with them and teaching them the ways of our association to help them grow stronger. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee and receive Macedonia and seat their delegates. The pastors and delegates came forward to receive the right hand of fellowship. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee and receive New Life and seat their delegates. The pastor and delegates came forward to receive the right hand of fellowship. The moderator welcomed both of these churches into the association and asked the congregation to pray for them. This makes a total of 67 churches at this time.

Elder Hasco Jenkins, Chairman of the Committee on Obituaries, reported that 56 had been received at this time. He also noted that several of the obituaries were long and would have to be shortened before being printed in the minutes. The clerk of the association later asked the people who want an obituary printed in the minutes to send it to him anytime throughout the year. This will save him time in preparing the minutes.

Elder Jim Jarnigan, Chairman of the Committee on Finance, reported \$5,055.00 in receipts for the year.

The moderator thanked the committees for their work and discharged them after their reports were given.

Elder Kenneth Mitchell was chosen to read the circular letter. Its message was that of encouragement to the Saints, a plea for continued unity, peace and love among God's people and a warning to our ministers that they might be used of God as shepherds in our churches with no pastor or whatever way He desires. It was motioned, seconded and voted to print it in the minutes as read.

The moderator appointed 3 of our preaching brethren to prepare the circular letter for 1995. They are Elders Clarence New, Carl Lawson and Roger VanHoose.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Church Letters for 1995. The committee includes: Delmer Wallen, Jr. (chairman), Hank Winegar, Steve Minton and Billy Jack Johnson (alternate).

It was motioned, seconded and voted to have all things which are standard printed in the minutes.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk \$700 in appreciation for his services.

The host church will continue to be responsible for the maintenance of the kitchen, with any needed repairs to be paid for by the association clerk. Elders Carl Lawson and Howard Sybert and Brothers Scott Mellons and Danny Lawson will oversee the association electrical and speaker systems.

At last year's association it was decided for the clerk to put together a book with the directions to all the churches in the association. The delegation was shown an example of the book and the associated costs for printing it. It was motioned, seconded and voted to order 250 copies of the book and send one to each church and each minister with copies available from the clerk to everyone else desiring one. This would be paid for with association funds. Due to depleted funds, the churches were encouraged to contribute more next year. It was also brought to the attention of the

delegation that the mobile kitchen would need new tires before it could be moved again. An offering was taken up while Sisters Lenore Stevens and Naomi Payne sang praises to the Lord. These women blessed our hearts with their songs as the congregation contributed \$904.75.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk to replenish the necessary forms to properly perform his duties.

During the singing and the receiving of the offering, it was brought to the clerk's attention that a donation of \$500 would be made toward the cost of printing the church directions book if the association would order a minimum of 1000. The original motion to order 250 copies was withdrawn and it was motioned, seconded and voted to order 1000 copies of the directions book. Copies of this book will be sent to each church and minister with other copies available from the clerk.

Sister Brenda Neeley came forward and testified of the great things God had done in her life. Her testimony encouraged us all and ensured us that with God we can do anything. Elder A. D. Howington also testified of the healing power of God in his life. He is the Great Physician and through Him all things are possible.

There were a total of 6 churches that asked for the association next year: Beech Grove, House's Chapel, Oak Grove, Peterson's Chapel, Richardson Chapel and Swan Creek. During the plea process, 4 churches withdrew, leaving the vote between Peterson's Chapel and Swan Creek. By a clear majority the delegation sent the association to Peterson's Chapel, where the Lord willing we will convene on Thursday morning (October 5) before the first Saturday in October, 1995. Introductory - Elder Oscar Irvin; Alternate - Elder Bobby Brown.

Adjourned until Saturday morning, October 1, 1994.

Saturday morning, October 1, 1994

God's spirit and beautiful weather blessed the memorial service and final business session. People gathered in the tent as Sister Zula McCullough led them in singing several songs. We were further blessed as God poured His Holy Spirit out on the Little Cowan singers. Sister Glennis Little led them as they sung from their hearts to glorify the name of Jesus. If we build our hopes on things eternal and hold to God's unchanging hand we'll soon fly away to glory land. He suffered and died on the old rugged cross for each one of us. All the disappointments in this life will soon be gone, for we have found a richer treasure that fadeth not away in the land of Beulah, blessed, blessed land of life.

Elder John Arnott served as moderator pro-tem to fill in for Elder J. H. Sybert who was serving in a funeral. He welcomed everyone to today's services and reminded them that this was our memorial service just before calling the delegation to order. Prayer requests were made for Maybelle Wilson, Hillard Webb, several that were in attendance asked for the congregation to remember them in prayer, all the requests made in the earlier services and especially for the lost. Let us pray in earnest for those that don't know God in the free pardon of sin. Elder Ron Bledsoe led us to the throne of grace.

Elder Arnott recognized the presence of Elder Bryan Moore that was in attendance

today. He is one of our older ministers and it was a joy to see him able to be with us again.

The committee on Religious Exercises now reports.

Stand tonight: Roger VanHoose and Eddie Malone.

Edwin Holbrook Memorial: Hasco Jenkins, Eckel Head and Bobby Brown.

Stand, Sunday morning, October 2, 1994: Brad Dutton and Hasco Jenkins.

Elder Oscar Irvin, pastor of the host church, came forward to thank the individuals, businesses and community in general for their help during the association. He thanked everyone for the help they rendered during the association, for their attendance and most of all for God's presence here at Little Cowan.

It was announced that Elder Bobby Brown would begin a revival on October 22 at Valley View and that Elder Bobby Williams would begin one on the same night at Roller's Chapel.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday as read.

The resolution of thanks, prepared by the clerk, was read. It was motioned, seconded and voted to print it in the minutes as read.

This day was dedicated as a memorial service to our friends and loved ones that have gone on to their reward since we last met. We miss these dear friends, but we also understand that they are much better off than we are, having already paid that debt we still owe. Let us all work diligently to continue the work they started that others may be saved and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Elder Arnott read the names and church affiliation of these dear saints for which obituaries have been received. Elder Bobby Williams came forward to take the lead in the service. He read from Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 and used as his text verse 14: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him." God does everything for a purpose and reason that we might fear Him. Here in this life we are sometimes given various titles which in God's eyes mean nothing, but one day soon we can read our title clear and enter in to our new home. Death has no power over God's people for we'll lay off this old coat and put on a new one. Elder Terry Sizemore followed with another wonderful message sent from God. The Lord plainly tells us that we are to put nothing with it and take nothing away from it, for when He sets something up it is right. Our faith must come from the only source, from the Lord of heaven. Let us diligently contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. These men preached so wonderfully to us. God has once again blessed His people. Thanks be to Him for everything.

The congregation fellowshiped and shouted the praises of God as we left the tent. Many continued to sing, preach and praise God all over the grounds.

Sunday morning, October 2, 1994

The Lord blessed us with another beautiful day for our last day of the association.

The people gathered still rejoicing from the many blessings God had bestowed on them throughout this association. Jesus first loved us and spoke to us that we might be able to tell His story through perfect submission to achieve the peace and joy only He can give. God truly blessed the Little Cowan singers as their voices blended in harmony to proclaim how they love Jesus, the best friend we ever had.

Elder Oscar Irvin, pastor of the host church, welcomed everyone to the services. He introduced all the ministers in attendance and thanked everyone for coming. God's blessings on His people have been so evident throughout this association that a prayer from one of our departed saints keeps coming to mind. Brother Cal Asbury would always ask the Lord to give His people a blessing that couldn't be gained, saved nor denied. I believe with all my heart that the Lord has answered this prayer during this association. Elder Bobby Brown and his wife, Eileen blessed us with their songs as did Brother Walker Bales; Elder Eddie Malone and his wife, Wanda; Sister Glennis Little and her son Tony; and Brother Darrell Roberts. These brothers and sisters praised the Lord with their wonderful songs and it was evident that He was pleased by the way He blessed His people. We don't know what tomorrow holds but we know who holds tomorrow. When our way groweth drear, God will take our hand and lead us on. Even though heaven's sweetest rose was broken at Calvary, it bloomed again in three short days. Each of us can honestly say there's been a change in us since Jesus set us free and He's holding to our hand as we journey through this land. The precious memories we have of this association and God's wonderful spirit will linger and flood our soul in the stillness of the midnight as sacred scenes unfold.

Prayer requests were made for the lost, the sick, all those made in previous services, Arthur Browning's nephew's newborn twins, many unspoken requests and many other spoken requests too numerous to mention. Even though the clerk could not keep up with all of the requests and at times couldn't see who was speaking each time, we can rest assured that the Lord knows each and every one of them and will answer them according to His blessed will. Elder Eckel Head led us to the throne of grace in a most humble prayer.

Elder Oscar Irvin asked that each minister in attendance take a part in the service. Elder Brad Dutton came forward to take the first part of the service. He read from Numbers 20:11 "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts a/so." He was followed by Elders Carl Lawson, Howard Sybert, Woodrow Fields, Eckel Head, Roger VanHoose, Eddie Malone and Bobby Brown. God is our rock and His grace is sufficient and will accomplish whereunto it is sent. He doesn't do anything halfway, He gives His children whatever they need to do what He has asked. We'll be able to recall these blessings we have received sometime when we are down and out, and if we let them help us keep this same sweet spirit then we will see our people saved. Let us be like the wise man who built his house on the solid rock and in so doing we will not be denied for Jesus will make us whole. When we drink of natural water we get thirsty again, but if we drink of that living water we will never thirst again. The Lord blessed His people through these men's words. He will use us if we will humble ourselves so He can work through us. Many seeds have been sown during the past few days and our prayer is that these precious souls may come to know the Lord in the free pardon of sin.

Over the past four days I have been blessed to write many words describing the events that have taken place. If it were possible to know all the words that the books of this world contain I still could not accurately describe what has taken place here at Little Cowan. I know of no words, in any language, that can show His magnificent

spirit that we as God's people have witnessed here during this association. Here in these last few lines I want to thank the people of Little Cowan for all they have done and for all they mean to me. You are all indeed a treasure that I hold dear to my heart.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart and I pray that God will continue to bless each and every one of you in the months and years to come. I believe all those in attendance would agree that it has been a real pleasure to be part of such a wonderful people. We give God all the praise and glory for it all. May He watch over and care for you until we meet again.

CIRCULAR LETTER

To the delegates of the churches composing the 142nd annual session of the Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists, convened with Little Cowan Church, September 30, 1994, and to all those who may hereafter read these words: Greetings from your fellow servants and brethren in Christ. May the riches of the love, grace and mercy of God our Father be unto you, and peace through His Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are humbled to have been selected to constitute this committee. The first Circular Letter to the churches of our association appeared in the minutes of 1882. It was called an Abstract of Faith or an outline of our faith and practice. Since that time, several hundred great trumpeters of the faith have written concerning our Articles of Faith, our rules and practices, the prevalent issues of their time, and have offered advice and issued warnings. Our desire, for our time, is that these words might encourage our people to "take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" and to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

There can be no denying that these are evil days. We live in a world which is opposed to our faith in God, especially as it is based on our belief in Jesus Christ. Many of us, from time to time, have looked at conditions in the world and expressed a belief that we are indeed living in the last days or as some say, "in the twilight of time."

It may be said with certainty that people of every generation have expressed this same belief. The early church looked for the Lord's return in their time. Even the Apostle Paul wrote of the last days as being in his time. In reality, the last days cover the entire period of time between the ascension of Christ and His return. However, according to the scriptures, as the time of the Lord's return draws nearer, mankind's true nature of corruptness and depravity will become widespread, and in our time, it is openly displayed for all to see.

In II Timothy 3:1-5, Paul wrote: "... in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Paul not only exposed man's sinful nature; he told us these types of people would be found in the church. He then added: "from such turn away." This means that they and their teachings are to be rejected and not simply ignored.

The world is filled today with those who call themselves Christian while denying the work of our Lord. In August of 1961, Redbook magazine published a survey of